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The Jacobs Report

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GRANHOLM: CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT IS FIRM

Democratic and Republican leaders reached agreement this week to boost the number of university-chartered schools by 150 over the next 10 years, a plan that would include a \$200 million charitable donation to Detroit charters from industrialist/philanthropist Bob Thompson.

The deal, reached earlier this week by the state's top leaders, remains valid and in process, despite being blasted by Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick in a recent edition of the Detroit News. Mr. Kilpatrick's comments caught all the major players in the Capitol off guard, especially since he was part of the negotiations and was expected to call legislators to rally support for the proposal.

Paul Hillegonds, president of Detroit Renaissance, remains firmly behind the agreement and says chances remain high it will be approved. "I don't know what to make of it," Mr. Hillegonds said of the Kilpatrick comments. "A lot of compromises were made reflecting concerns of the mayor."

Granholtm spokesperson Liz Boyd said the mayor was included in the negotiations and had indicated his backing. "His last words to the governor was [sic] that he supported the agreement," Ms. Boyd said. "He was at the table; he was part of the agreement."

Matt Resch, spokesperson for House Speaker Rick Johnson, said that the mayor and the speaker had talked just prior to the agreement being reached and that nothing in the package was a surprise.

The governor has pledged that the agreement will move forward, and Democrats have rallied around her with new-found solidarity behind the legislation, reflecting the high level of esteem in which Governor Granholtm is held.

House Democratic Leader Dianne Byrum (D-Onondaga) said that she fully expects the legislation to pass both the House and Senate and be on the Governor's desk within a week.

TAUBMAN TAKEOVER BILL PASSES SENATE, 24-14; GOES TO GOVERNOR

A bipartisan group of senators supported HB 4764 on Thursday, effectively protecting Bloomfield Hills-based Taubman Centers from a hostile takeover orchestrated by the Simon/Westfield group. The legislation is now on its way to Governor Jennifer Granholm, who is expected to sign the measure into law.

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The 24-14 margin of passage did not reflect the contentious debate surrounding HB 4764, which many Capitol insiders jokingly referred to as the "Lobbyist Full Employment Bill." The hordes of lobbyists, lawyers and publicists hired by both supporters and opponents attracted a level of intensity and national interest rarely seen in the capital.

And it may not be over. A spokesperson for the Simon/Westfield group said that attorneys for the organization are studying whether to attempt a referendum on the bill.

The sponsor of the bill, Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Zeeland), praised the Senate action, saying, "This important legislation will protect 100 companies founded, incorporated and headquartered in Michigan from hostile takeovers by outside corporate raiders."

"This is very important legislation," added Sen. Alan Cropsey (R-DeWitt). "We are re-instituting a law that was commonly understood before this decision. We don't like federal judges telling us what our laws mean after it's been settled law for over 10 years."

CELEBRATE YOUR FREEDOM TO READ: Banned Books Week - September 20–27, 2003

Did you know that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger and the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling are the most frequently banned books in the United States, according to the American Library Association?

If certain individuals have their way, these titles (and many more) would be removed from our school and library shelves so that you and your children would not have the free opportunity to read them. It seems incredulous, but these titles *have* been removed from some public shelves, and publishers have been pressured not to print them.

"The ability to read, speak, think and express ourselves freely are core American values," said Judith Krug, director of the American Library Association's (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom. "We hope Banned Books Week helps to remind Americans of the importance of our freedom at a time when freedoms are being eroded in the United States. Now – more than ever – we must let freedom read."

"It's not just the books under fire now that worry me," said author Judy Blume. "It is the books that will never be written. The books that will never be read. And all due to the fear of censorship. As always, young readers will be the real losers."

Banned Books Week, an annual celebration of the freedom to read, is observed the last week of September. Each year, librarians, booksellers, teachers and countless others take this opportunity to highlight the importance of intellectual freedom and remind us not to take this precious democratic freedom for granted. This year's theme is "Open Books for Open Minds."

For more information, please visit www.ala.org or call your local library.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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